Writing an Opinion Essay

Grade 2

**Purpose**: In opinion/ persuasive writing the writer presents his or her opinion and tries to convince the reader to agree. Persuasive writing is not just appropriate for high school essays; you can prepare simple persuasive writing activities for students in primary grades (K-2), too. Fundamentally, persuasive writing expresses the writer’s opinion, and kids certainly have opinions. Primary students can learn to form their opinions into sentences and paragraphs with help from the teacher.

**Overview**

Together, students and teacher use charts and an opinion organizer to learn how to write text with an opinion. The teacher will model and show many examples of opinion texts. After many experiences of working with opinion texts as a class (hearing, and interactively writing some), students will then write, revise, edit, and publish an opinion paper of their own.

**Background Information**

**Using Facts and Opinion Correctly** -- Do you know the difference between facts and opinions? Facts tell something that is known to be true, or something that really happened. They tell you about the way things really are. Opinions are statements that someone believes. They tell you how a person thinks or feels.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Facts | Opinions |
| Both dogs and cats can be pets. | I’d rather have a dog than a cat for a pet. |
| Chocolate is made from cacao beans. | Chocolate is my favorite sweet. It tastes great. |
| It snowed last night. | We shouldn’t have to go to school when it snows. |
| Summer is a season of the year. | My favorite time of year is summer because it is warm and I can do many activities with my family. |

**Sticking to the Facts** -- It’s important to stick to the facts when you’re trying to get someone to agree with you. It’s also important to listen for facts when someone else wants you to agree with them! Here are four points to remember about stating facts:

1. A statement in not a fact just because most people agree with it. (A kangaroo would be a good classroom pet because almost everybody in the class thinks so).
2. A statement is not a fact if it is based on feelings. (A rattlesnake would be a good class pet because I think rattlesnakes are neat).
3. A statement is not a fact if it is a half-truth. (If a cat scratches you, you’ll get sick).
4. A statement is not a fact if it makes things seem worse (or better) than they really are. (When a bee stings you, it hurts so much you go crazy).

**Become a Logical Thinker:**

1. **Decide** on your purpose and state it clearly.
2. **Gather** whatever information you can on the topic.
3. **Focus** on a “claim” or “point” you feel you can prove.
4. **Support** you “point” or “claim” with evidence which is interesting and reliable.
5. **Explain** why your audience should accept your evidence.
6. **Restate** your “claim” or point.
7. **Urge** your audience to accept your point of view.

**Choosing a Topic**

Topics that do not require any research or prior knowledge are appropriate for primary level persuasive writing. For example, choose topics that every student can relate to, such as family, food, playing, school, etc. Form the topic into a question which the student will answer. “Why do you like cold cereal?” or “Do you think young children should play sports?” are suitable writing topics for students in primary grades.

**Teaching Relevant Vocabulary**

Learning relevant vocabulary and phrases will help students form their ideas into words.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I agree | I disagree | I think that | I feel that | but |
| yet | however | also | should | should not |

**Resources:**

1. Can You Convince Me? Writing Persuasive Lesson

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/convince-developing-persuasive-writing-56.htmllans>

1. UEN Site: Persuasive / Opinion Writing <http://www.uen.org/core/languagearts/writing/persuasive.shtml>
2. Possible Literature Selections:
   1. The *Great Brain* Series by J.D. Fitzgerald
   2. *Old Dogs Are the Best Dogs* by Gene Weingarten
   3. [*I Am the Dog I Am the Cat*](http://www.amazon.com/Am-Dog-Cat/dp/0803715048/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1326763399&sr=1-1) by [Donald Hall](http://www.amazon.com/Donald-Hall/e/B000AQ4M1M/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1326763399&sr=1-1)
   4. *On the Banks of Plum Creek* by Laura Ingalls Wilder (the chapter about Nellie Olson)
   5. *Matilda*  by Roald Dahl (the excerpts that give Miss Trunchbull’s opinions about children)
   6. *Thank You Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco (best teacher)
3. *Write on Track, a Handbook for Young Writers*: pgs. 61, 271-273.
4. *Write Source 2000*: pgs. 343-349.
5. Choose from a variety of graphic organizers that are included.
6. Chart Paper and chart markers
7. Opinion Essay scoring rubric
8. Have-a-go-at Spelling Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Writing Traits:**  For this task, students will write an opinion essay that will:   1. have a clear purpose, organization, and word choice. 2. contain clear and coherent sentences of varying lengths. 3. clearly state an opinion and support that opinion with examples, vignettes, quotes, comparisons, and closing by restating the opinion. 4. have capitalization at the beginning of sentences and proper nouns. 5. use commas correctly if they are making a list. 6. produce a final edited and published piece. | [[Share](http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php)Share](http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php) |

**Approximate Duration of Lessons: 10 - 20 days (20 – 30 minute sessions)**

**Day 1: Teacher Read Aloud/Class Discussion/IAW Write and Discuss**

1. Choose one of the suggested paragraphs or one of your own choosing. Read the parts that state an opinion. Or simply start by stating your own opinion about an easy topic (i.e., Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are the best sandwiches in the world).
2. Show the children a chart you have generated about the topic you wish to discuss. For the purpose of this lesson we will be using the PJ&B example. Generate at least 10 – 12 statements that have both fact and opinion scattered throughout. The following is an example.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fact or opinion | Statements  (fact or opinion) |
|  | You need bread to make a sandwich. |
|  | Peanut butter is the most delicious tasting spread in the world. |
|  | Everyone loves peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. |
|  | My mom loves to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for my lunch because she knows they are my favorite. |
|  | Everyone should eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch. |
|  | Grape jelly is the best flavor of jelly to use on a PB&J sandwich. |
|  | Chunky peanut butter can be used to make a PB&J sandwich. |
|  | Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches can be made with different kinds of jelly. |

Use fact/opinion sticky notes and let children decide which statements are fact and which are opinion.

1. Use the opinions from the chart; interactively place the opinion statements on the large graphic organizer you have chosen to use during this unit. (You will notice that several examples have been included in this packet. You choose the one you think your children will be most successful using).

**Day 2:** **Teacher Read Aloud/Class Discussion/IAW Write and Discuss**

1. Continue with the discussion and interactive writing from the day before.
2. When you have finished wiring the IAW paragraph, you could stop and label the parts of an opinion essay – at first our opinion essays will have:

1). A stated opinion

2). Three supporting details (evidence or examples)

3). A conclusion restating the opinion

**3. Keep this chart displayed during the entire Opinion Writing Unit.**

**Day 3: Class Discussion/Teacher Write and Discuss**

1. Use the same organizer that you used for the IAW about the PB&J writing. You will not make a large chart so that you can model your own thinking. Show the students how you will begin to fill it in and you generate your own opinion essay.
2. As a class, generate one or two topics that students might choose to write about for their first try. Keep this writing assignment pretty simple at first.
3. Release the children with their organizer as they decide on a topic to write.
4. They will begin to fill out their Opinion Organizer.
5. Bring children together for an “**Author’s Chair”.** Choose 2 students to share.

**Day 4: Teacher Read Organizer/ Teacher Models/Class Discussion/Children Write**

1. Group gathers to hear the teacher read and write additional ideas on organizer.
2. Students get out their organizer and pair up back-to-back with a partner. The students will then pair-share with their partner what they have written so far.
3. Students will continue to finish their organizer.
4. Bring children together for an “**Author’s Chair”.** Choose 2 students to share.

**Day 5: Teacher Writes/Class Discussion/Students Write/Discuss**

1. Today the teacher will write their opinion essay on chart paper using the graphic organizer a guide. Teacher will model for students how they will be writing their Opinion Essay.
2. Students will use their organizer to write their own Opinion Essay.
3. Teacher conferences and teaches as needed.
4. Bring children together for an “**Author’s Chair”.** Choose 2 students to share.

**Day 6: Edit and Publish Opinion Essay**

1. Students will edit their opinion essays using the Have-a-go-at-Spelling form.
2. Students will publish their opinion essay by writing it again; making sure it is free from errors. They could also draw a picture.

**Day 7: Students Select Topic/Use Graphic Organizer (Students will be on their own!)**

1. Students will select a topic to write about. It will be easiest if they choose something they are really good at (i.e., a sport, hobby, talent,
2. Students will use *the Opinion Graphic Organizer and the Opinion Paper Guideline*.
3. Each student will fill out their organizer.

**Day 8- 11: Students will write their Opinion Essay.**

1. Following the procedures from Days 3-6, students will select a topic of their own choosing to do the following:
   * + 1. Fill out the Opinion Organizer
       2. Write their Opinion Essay
       3. Edit their Opinion Essay
       4. Publish their Opinion Essay
2. Students will use the scoring rubric and revise. They will make sure their paper will:
3. have a clear purpose, organization, and word choice.
4. contain clear and coherent sentences of varying lengths.
5. clearly state an opinion and support that opinion by writing examples, vignettes, quotes, comparison, closing by restating the opinion..
6. Students will edit using the following:
7. have capitalization at the beginning of sentences and proper nouns.
8. use commas correctly if they are making a list.
9. produce a final edited and published piece.

**Day 12 (or more days if needed): Students will publish their opinion essay for a final score using the Opinion Essay scoring rubric.**